

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-09

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INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1978

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 20481

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, TH

SUBJ: THE KING IN THE SOUTH

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK FM SONGKHLA SEP 26 RPTD
FOR YOUR INFO:

SONGKHLA 171

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV PINS TH

SUBJ: THE KING IN THE SOUTH

1. HM THE KING RETURNED TO BANGKOK EARLY THIS WEEK AFTER
NEARLY TWO MONTHS AT HIS PALACE IN NARATHIWAT. THIS MARKS
SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR ROYAL FAMILY HAS DEVOTED THAT MUCH
TIME TO THIS AREA. THE SOUTHERN PALACE IS STILL UNFINISHED
AND LIKELY REMAIN SO FOR SOME TIME, BUT THE KING'S ANNUAL
VISIT HERE WILL CONTINUE.

2. ALTHOUGH LAST YEAR THE ROYAL PARTY TOURED NEARLY EVERY
SOUTHERN PROVINCE, THIS YEAR IT SPENT NEARLY ALL OF THE TIME
IN THE MUSLIM PROVINCES OF NARATHIWAT, YALA AND PATTANI,
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EXCEPT FOR VISITS TO CEREMONIES FOR POLICE

SLAIN IN CPT CLASHES FARTHER NORTH. MUSLIM VILLAGERS CAME IN LARGER NUMBERS AND SEEMED MORE EAGER TO GREET THE KING THAN LAST YEAR. CROWDS WERE BIGGER, AND THE PARTY MADE AN EFFORT TO VISIT MORE MOSQUES, SEVERAL OF THEM IN DANGEROUS BANDIT AREAS.

3. RESULTS OF KING'S VISITS ARE VISIBLE NOT ONLY IN CROWDS BUT IN ECONOMIC PROJECTS: MORE ROADS PAVED IN NARATHIWAT, NEW IRRIGATION PROJECTS ON GOVERNMENT LAND, ATTEMPTS AT MORE MUSLIM CONTACT WITH RTG OFFICIALS.

COMMENT: WHILE SECURITY SITUATION SEEMS INTRACTABLE FOR RTG WITH LITTLE HOPE FOR ELIMINATION OF SEPARATIST/BANDITS IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE, PRESENCE OF KING ON SCENE IS MOST POSITIVE MOVE RTG HAS MADE IN MUSLIM AREAS. ROYAL PARTY IS EFFECTIVE IN ATTEMPTING SHOW MUSLIMS THEY THAI CITIZENS TOO. CORRUPTION SEEMS TO VANISH AS KING PASSES BY, AND EFFICIENCY BLOOMS: TOO BAD THE COUNTRY CANNOT HAVE 72 PALACES.
CASTRODALE
MASTERS

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